

Tower Tidings

Where Everybody's Welcome, Nobody's Perfect and Anything's Possible!

SPIRIT MATTERS

"Fearless conversation is not just a worship theme; it's an invitation by God.

"I am giving you a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples." -- John 13:34-35

"My dear friends, you should be quick to listen & slow to speak or to get angry." --James 1:19



Our conversations are the foundation for life together, as individuals and as a church. Jesus models fearless conversations for us in so many of his encounters. The scriptures echo Christ's life and teach us how to connect love and openness to our conversations as well.

This is always a learning process for all of us. It's unrealistic to expect perfection in our exchanges. Rather aim for progress and celebrate successes, as authors Patterson, Grenny, McMillian & Switzler in "Crucial Conversations," suggest. In our learning & imperfections I'm reminded that our conversations become holy when we acknowledge our brokenness & Sin (I like how Francis Spafford talks about sin in "Unapologetic" as the Human Propensity to Foul Things Up or HPt FTu); and when we recognize the image of God in one another and the presence of Christ in our gathering.

We'll talk in some detail about the "how to" and the "what if's" and the "what abouts" in our series. In a nutshell, we need to begin helping one another feel safe, valued and heard before we will deal with issues and content effectively. Clarity is our friend. Honest, personal and reflective participation goes a long way. We keep humility in the mix when we acknowledge that the church, the issues at hand and life itself, is both bigger than us and not about any of us as individuals, keeps humility in the mix too. It is about following Jesus. It is about living love with audacious abundance so that we nurture thriving lives in our congregation and in our community. (Our culture's present encouragement to "tell it like it is" may feel good in the moment, but we quickly find that it is both destructive and far from loving or Christ-like. Honesty is valuable. Without honesty and kindness, emotional dumping is violence.)

If you're looking for a starting point check out the communication guide in this newsletter. You can also just Google "Communication tips" and you'll find many good starting ideas. Further I invite you to consider fearless conversations with your Koinonia group, prayer partner or one of our pastoral staff.

Relationship is purpose of God's love and of fearless conversation. Some conversations are so challenging they may even need a third neutral person to be "Switzerland" and help the discussion build relationships rather than harm them. When we embrace these conversations we embrace the love of Jesus and the people Jesus loves: followers, curious onlookers, strangers, enemies... everyone.

Fearless conversation is part of what it takes to have a healthy, growing church. Will you join me in the challenge; this spiritual discipline? I commit to the challenge with you, because I'm excited about sharing the love of Christ that demonstrates magnetic love for lives that matter. Dare, with me, to believe God is big enough to hold our differences and dreams. Dare, with me, to believe that both you and I could be wrong at times and still be loved and valued. Dare to believe together that God's grace is enough for the journey.

10,000 Joys with Christ, Pastor Dave



UPCOMING WORSHIP Our upcoming worship will include the pastoral voices of Pastor Dave and Pastor Jason focusing on Fearless Conversation in January and early February. With the start of Lent our focus will shift toward Prayer themed around Mark Batterson's book, "The Circle Maker."

January theme: "Fearless Conversations"

Jan 14 "How to"

Jan 21 "About Politics"

Jan 28 "With Myself"

Feb. 4 "About Sexuality"

Feb. 11 "Disagreeing Well"

Feb 14 **Lent begins** with Ash Wed Service @ 7pm

Lenten Theme: Prayer, using Mark Batterson's book and the study guide "Draw the Circle"

Holy Week Services

Holy Thursday 7pm

Good Friday Noon Crosswalk

Easter Sunday 8, 9, 10:30 services

Being The Hands and Feet of Jesus

Opportunities for Service and Mission

PFUMC Mission Commission News

Our church mission commission thanks everyone for their food donations to the Caring Cupboard in memory of Jeff Shroyer, who was a long-time dedicated volunteer at the Cupboard, as well as a well-loved member at Palmyra First.

You are asked to consider bringing additional items for the Caring Cupboard throughout February. A few years back, we called this February food collection food for **Hungry Hearts**. In addition to canned goods and other non-perishables, you are welcome to donate non-food items such as soap, shampoo, tissues, toilet paper, etc. In February there will be bags decorated with Valentine hearts available to hold your donations for Hungry Hearts. Thank you for your ongoing generosity.



WE NEED OUTSIDE GREETERS!! — This involves standing at the parking lot door between 10:00 and 10:30 to greet folks coming into the church and to help open doors, etc. If this sounds like something you could do, please see Amy Dellinger (717-821-0298) and we will add you to our list. Thanks for considering this opportunity!



Begins
February 14



"456" FELLOWSHIP

Our next gathering will be in February, when we will have a cozy fire-side chat (after loads of fun and games, of course!) and see if we can solve some of our world problems of hate, power, and greed. All friends from grades 3-7 are invited to join us!

Knit, Crochet & Pray

...has been knitting, crocheting and delivering many items to a variety of places. As the cold weather approached we sent two large bags of hats, mittens and scarves to Lebanon Family Health Services. We also have a bag ready to deliver to Chautauqua for Knitting4Peace. Our next gathering is scheduled for Jan.31st, 1 pm south wing—weather permitting.



Of particular need now are prayer shawls (minimum 21" wide, 60" long,) baby blankets approximately 30" square (rectangular blankets are also welcome), baby booties, men's scarves (min.6" wide by 54" long), mittens, hats and scarves for women and kids , and of course tan and brown faced Peace Pals.

Our next time to knit and crochet together will be Wednesday, Jan. 31st, 1 pm in the south wing—weather permitting.

T.E.A. (through eyes of another) Update

"Book discussions with women in mind"

T.E.A. Selections for winter/spring 2018:

Feb. 1—*Forty Autumns* by Nina Willner

Mar. 1—*The Fortunes* by Peter Ho Davies

Apr. 5—*Legacy of Lucy Harte* by Emma Heatherington

In addition, we'll discuss highlights of *The Book of Joy* – conversations with the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. We decided to talk about a section at a time, rather than the whole book all at one sitting...Let's stretch out **exploring joy** (it works out to about 2-3 pages per day).

Feb 1— pp. 1-64 and "Joy Practices" pp.311-316

Mar. 1— pp. 67-123 and "Joy Practices" pp.317-325

Apr. 5— pp. 125-188 and "Joy Practices" pp.326-331

All women who enjoy reading and discussing books are invited to join us the first Thursday of the month, 7 pm, in the south wing.



Noah's Little Ark Update



Noah's Little Ark - Registration Opens

We are excited to launch our online registration system this winter. Registration opens January 15 for current families and February 17 for the general public. Additional information is available at our website: pfumc.org/preschool

Noah's Little Ark - 20th Anniversary Celebration!

We will celebrate 20 years of excellence at Noah's Little Ark on February 17 with an Open House and Family Fun Event! We look forward to sharing the wonderful history we have and the exciting path we have ahead of us.

Bunny Breakfast

Our annual Bunny Breakfast will take place this spring! Want to be part of the planning team? Email

Kimberly.Zenyuch@gmail.com



Harnessing the Power of Prayer

If you're like me and many others, when it comes to prayer we feel like we're out of our depths. This year's Lenten Study focusing around Mark Batterson's bestselling *The Circle Maker* is designed to help us go deeper in our prayer life both as individuals and as a community of faith.

Given some of the positive feedback regarding our Advent study, Pastor Dave and I are going to tie-in our preaching to several key themes found in the book. You will have several opportunities to participate in this exciting study. First, you can read *The Circle Maker* which is available wherever books are sold. Secondly, you can participate in a k-group which will be utilizing the study curriculum that accompanies the book. We are also encouraging those who wish to go deeper in their prayer lives to join us in the 40-day "Draw the Circle" prayer challenge which you can do by purchasing the *Draw the Circle* devotional book. Finally, each Sunday during Lent you can attend service and be encouraged and challenged by a sermon that reinforces and expands on topics covered by the book, small group study, and devotional!



Please consider joining us in one or more—or all!—of these exciting endeavors as we seek God's face in prayer this time of Lenten preparation. For more information on the books, small group study, devotional, or preaching series, please contact Pastor Jason.

P.S. Don't let the cost of a book stop you. Talk with Pastor Dave or Jason.

STRATEGIC PLANNING – WHAT'S UP? The strategic planning team and Church Council has worked with a coach, Rev. Jenn Williams (Executive Pastor & Coach) to lay out our process and reflection.

We began with an all day learning retreat on Nov. 20, 2017. We followed with listening sessions with staff, K-groups, and open congregational groups in December and January. Next comes distilling what we're learning into a revision of our mission, vision and values beginning on January 15, 2018. With that in hand we can take our goals, information about our church and our community, along with our new learning and insights, and create a strategy going forward.

Our desire is to include you with reporting through the bulletin, email blasts, and conversations. Our suspicion is that we may ask you a question or two for input. Our hope is to invite you into the values and plans we share with your participation and commitment. Our timeline is to have this all in place no later than summer (June).

We realize that our successful future will call on us for many elements like mutual care, bible study, worship and more. We acknowledge that we can't do or be everything to everyone and so we will need to focus relentlessly on the shared values and strategies that grow from our work together.

Ultimately we give thanks that God's grace is enough to complement our strengths and redeem our mistakes. We give thanks that Jesus models for us audacious love that invites everyday lives to thrive. We celebrate that our salvation in Jesus was a bold and strategic offer of God's love one person and place at a time until it reached a cross and empty tomb and opened the way for all us to share in the work.

Strategic planning in our complex world may raise hope, questions, expectations, fears, needs, opportunities, and more. In faith we step into the invitation of Christ to make disciples for the transformation of the world starting right in our own neighborhood.

Our strategic planning team is : Dave Yascavage (chair), Josh Freeman, Jason Morton, and Danielle Pulaski. They work closely with our Church Council: Alice Hamilton (Chair), Tim Benson, Lou Fouche, Rick McCann, Kathy Meyers, Dave Yascavage, Jane Zimmerman



More PFUMC News

PRAYER REQUESTS—WE LOVE 'EM Please write them down or call them into the office with the following info:

- Your name
- Where do you want this shared (print, pastor, prayer time...)
- If it's about someone else do you have their specific permission to share it publically?



· We love hearing about prayer results, praise, God moments too!

Prayer changes us and our world. We do best as we love one another and pray for one another. Pray and share God at work in prayer on the sheet in your Sunday News today!

WHAT PREACHING TOPIC WOULD HELP YOU? Is there a scripture, a question, a topic or something else that would be helpful for you to hear addressed in our preaching schedule? Let Pastor Dave know, at dave@pfumc.us or 838-2551 x203. We may not be able to get to everything, but your needs and interests can help Pastors Dave & Jason plan. Thanks.

Faith Acts United Methodist Women News

Our December event, a "Baby Shower for Jesus" was held on Sat. Dec. 2nd. Besides enjoying a lovely breakfast prepared and served by Dave Yascavage and friends, we had cheerful Christmas music by Ben and Sam Kelly, and Sam led us in several shower/Christmas games. We collected almost 300 baby items for Lebanon Family Health Services, which will be distributed to needy Lebanon County moms and their babies.

On Feb. 11th, we will be making favors for nursing homes. If you enjoy crafts, come join us.

A *Faithful Heart* is the title of the book for our women's study for 8 weeks beginning Sun. Feb. 15th 6:30 pm in the south wing. Open to **all** women (you don't have to be active in UMW), this study and discussion will focus on strengthening our hearts and experiencing God more fully. For more information, contact Sally Smedley smedleys@ix.netcom.com.



THANK YOU!!

I would like to say a heartfelt "thanks" for all the cards and prayers following the death of my son, Dean. Your kindness and thoughtful gestures mean so much.

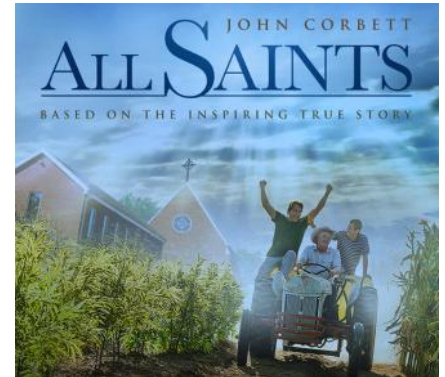
Linda Webber & Family



Remember to set your clocks AHEAD 1 hour before going to bed on **Mar. 10** or you may be late for services on Sunday, March 11!!

Free Dinner and a Movie "All Saints" Sunday April 22nd, 2018

Dinner 4:30pm-5:30pm,
Movie starts at 5:30pm



Come join us for a great dinner and movie - plus it's FREE. The movie is based on an inspiring true story about a church that might be a little bit like this one. . .

A pastor's first assignment is a church with about a dozen members. His job - help them let go and find new churches, and then sell the old one. But God had other plans. . .

One week after the new pastor showed up, several refugees from Burma came to church. They didn't speak much English, but they're believers, and in obvious need. And they're farmers. The new plan - maybe from God or maybe from the pastor - have the Burma refugees start a farm on the church's land. They can feed themselves and raise money to pay the church's mortgage. Lots of hard work comes next. Along with help from others, some doubts, a few problems, and a crisis or two. God's will and plan was different than what anyone expected. . . and this movie may leave you thinking - about *your* purpose. . .

HONOR SOMEONE WITH ALTAR FLOWERS —

Feb. 4, 11, 18 & 25 and **Mar. 4** are open dates available in 2018. There are others further into the year as well so please ask. Contact the church office (838-2551 or churchoffice@pfumc.us) to reserve a Sunday.



Reminder: Our next newsletter will be printed in April for Summer 2018 (May, June & July). Articles are due by **April 10** for printing on Apr. 16, 2018. Send news items to admin@pfumc.us.

Begin planning now for the remainder of 2018: Fall/Back to School news (Aug, Sep, Oct) will be due **July 10** for printing on July 16; and Advent/New Year news will be due **Oct. 10** for printing on Oct. 15.

Additional Opportunities to Serve

Children's Ministries, Winter 2018

At the end of last year, our children and kids learned about the story of Christmas through our Discovery Dunes hour each week with snacks, games, songs, crafts, and activities. The 456 had a great Christmas



party with mad libs, guess who, gingerbread houses, and pizza!

Our next 456 meeting will be in February, when we will have a cozy fire-side chat (after loads of fun and games, of course!) and see if we can solve some of our world problems of hate, power, and greed. All friends from grades 3-7 are invited to join us!

Resurrection Sunday is coming up, and is an excellent time for children and youth to participate in celebration and reflection with us. We have many traditions and rituals that we use to help us understand and ponder the mystery and wonder of a Crucified God, and it may be confusing and strange for adults as well as children – let's encourage ourselves to talk together with friends and family about our experiences and musings of a God who is humble, a God who gives away power, a God who chooses to die for love instead of kill for freedom.

We are still searching for an every-week nursery helper from 9-10am on Sundays. If you are interested, or know someone who is, please give me a call or email.

Many, many thanks to all the wonderful people who help to welcome and serve and teach the children and families here at Palmyra First UMC. No conversation, smile, or kind word is too small to encourage one another in our community of faith.



GREAT JOB WITH HEIFER, ANGEL TREE AND RISE AGAINST HUNGER!

Thanks to your gracious giving we completed three very successful mission campaigns at the end of 2017!

While the Salvation Army "Angel Tree" project helps bring Christmas gifts and clothing to children of families in need in Lebanon, Heifer project funds reach around the globe to provide renewable and shared resources, mainly in the form of animals, for people facing starvation and hunger related diseases. This year we assisted 50 families through the Angel Tree and donations to Heifer amounted to a fantastic \$1,345!

This is in addition to the generous giving and work related to the November "Rise Against Hunger" campaign that paid for and assembled thousands of meals for distribution to the poorest of regions around the world.

On behalf of the mission team of First Church we thank you for truly being the hands and feet of Jesus both locally and globally. **Great job!**



HOSPITALITY HELPERS NEEDED — we are seeking volunteers to get the coffee and cookies ready on Sunday mornings. A big **thank you** to those who have already volunteered. Pick a date, sign up on the clipboard by the Welcome Desk. Contact Michele Weaver (717-533-1206) with questions.



Mission Trip Scheduled for July 14-20, 2018

Our mission work team will be heading south to work with Rural Missions again this summer. In addition to the long list of existing projects, the area was hit by the hurricanes of 2017, so even more was added to the workload of Rural Missions. All the recipients of the assistance given through the Methodist-affiliated Rural Missions are carefully screened as to economic need and the nature and urgency of their repairs. Following this vetting process jobs are prioritized, and the work completed as teams are available.



Although some of our work requires skilled individuals, there is always plenty to do for those who are less skilled in building trades. The experience is life changing as you work with the local people and bond together with members of your church family doing God's work. The trip dates this year are July 14-20. And with our mid-week picnic and other after-work activities we also have lots of fun. To have your questions answered or to sign up contact Tom Ryan or Rick McCann. *Come and join us this July.*

Thank You for Your Generous Support! You responded to our need with abundant gifts! We ended the year \$3,714.53 in the red which so much better than the almost \$20,000 need at November's end. It is amazing. This offers us an ongoing challenge to support ministry and allows us to keep serving our children, our community and our worshipping congregation in significant ways. Thank you Palmyra First! You are amazing!

LOOKING FOR LITURGISTS — If you would be willing to serve as a liturgist at our 8:00, 9:00 or 10:30 services, please contact the church office. We are particularly in need of additional volunteers for our 10:30 service.



Easter Flowers – 2018

Please use the space below to place your order for flowers. Please be sure to print or write clearly, and use the exact wording you wish to appear in the bulletin.

___ Geraniums (5" pot)	\$4.00 ea	___ Lilies (3-4 bloom)	\$7.00 ea
___ Daffodils mini (6.5" pot)	\$6.00 ea	___ Azaleas (#1 Hardy)	\$11.00 ea
___ Tulips (5-6 bulbs, 3 colors)	\$6.00 ea		

(Please use the exact wording you wish to appear in the bulletin)

"in loving memory of" _____

"in honor of" _____

"placed by" _____

Amount paid \$ _____

Please give flowers to shut in _____

Please use the exact amount when making payment. Checks should be payable to **First United Methodist Church**, marked "**Easter Flowers**".
Order deadline: February 25, 2018

FEARLESS CONVERSATION GUIDE

Communicating effectively is the keystone to healthy relationships and community. Here are some tips:

John 13:34-35 "...a new command. You must love each other, just as I have loved you. *If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples."

James 1:19 "My dear friends, you should be quick to listen & slow to speak or to get angry."



- Be clear on your expectations:** Why are you having this conversation and what do you hope will happen because of this conversation? And how will you respond when others can't or won't meet those expectations?
- Invite God into the Conversation:** This may be a formal prayer or acknowledgement, but more often it's simply reminding ourselves throughout the exchange that God is with us, we are not alone.
- Choose your timing:** A relaxed body, time and space can be a huge help. Most of the time we choose when to have a conversation.
- Stick to the matter in hand:** Don't try to get everything off your chest at once. One thing, one conversation.
- Avoid starting sentences with 'You . . .':** Don't start out with an accusation or by sounding like you're making one.
- Avoid saying never or always:** Categorical statements are provocative and unlikely to be true.
- Watch your should's and shouldn't's:** It sounds condescending and often tells us you have strong feelings about something. Look for alternative ways to talk about the issue and your feelings.
- Don't interrupt:** This is love and respect. Keep notes in order to remember. Having a problem with a constant talker? Agree to time limits or turns for the next conversation.
- Stay calm or postpone the conversation:** When we get angry, reason tends to disappear. Relax or take a time out.
- Avoid sarcasm, monologues or mind reading:** Don't try to manipulate the situation to your advantage. If you're speaking or acting in a way you wouldn't with your boss, then ask yourself why.
- Express your feelings as well as your opinions:** Saying that you feel unvalued when information is not shared with you, explains not just what the problem is, but the effect that the problem is having on you. This takes practice!
- Learn from others about strong communication:** One attempt is a great start. We grow stronger with practice. Learn new options and broaden vocabulary for clearer expression.
- Ask for help:** We all need a neutral listener or coach from time to time. That's a good thing!